

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Study was commissioned to examine the transportation needs of the City of North Miami, and to prepare a comprehensive plan for the implementation of one or more circulators within the City of North Miami. The Study was funded through the FY 98 Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization Municipal Grant Program. The City identified two specific objectives to be met by a municipal circulator program:

- To provide transit services tailored to the needs of residents unable to provide their own transportation; for use as a convenience and courtesy service; and by the general public service, to improve their quality of life, to provide a sense of community by creating a city bus loop system, and to assist businesses via circulator which allows for greater ease of customer travel, and
- To attract new segments of the population to public transit, thereby reducing single occupant vehicle usage, and implementing the Transportation Demand Management initiatives of the City, Miami-Dade County, and the State of Florida. Specifically, the City of North Miami municipal circulator program will interface with pedestrians, other municipal and Unincorporated Miami-Dade County (UMSA) circulators, and the county-wide bus systems at critical locations (i.e. Biscayne Boulevard/125th Street, NE 6th Avenue/125th Street).

During the course of the Study, the City reviewed and analyzed the following information:

- 1990 census data; census updates from the City of North Miami and Miami-Dade County (MDC) Planning
- MDC and North Miami Comprehensive Development Master Plans (CDMP)
- MDC Transportation Improvement Plan (TDP) for FY 98
- Northeast Miami-Dade Transit Improvement Study Recommendations and Technical Memoranda, including detailed route analyses
- Miami-Dade Transit Agency (MDTA) 1993 Onboard Survey
- North Miami Downtown Action Plan; Florida Department of Transportation West Dixie Highway Arterial Analysis (1991); MDC North Miami Traffic Study (1995)

Interviews were conducted with MDTA, City of North Miami, North Miami Foundation, Miami-Dade School Board, and Johnson & Wales University staff. A survey was developed and distributed to Johnson & Wales University students and to se-

lected North Miami residents. The City held public hearings during the Study, to obtain preliminary data and to review proposed route alignments.

Background

The North Miami Study continues the implementation of the 1995 Miami-Dade Transit Agency *Northeast Dade Transit Improvement Study* (NEDTIS). The primary objectives of the NEDTIS were to:

- develop a coordinated and effective public transportation network to meet current transit needs and attract new transit riders in Northeast Miami-Dade, and
- integrate improvements into applicable County Transportation and Planning documents to support the future transit needs as the Northeast Miami-Dade community changes and grows.

The NEDTIS recommended the creation of a three-tier system of transit services. The first tier would provide “premium,” limited express service to downtown Miami, Miami Beach and other employment centers within the County; the second tier would continue traditional regional bus service, and the third tier (circulators) is intended to offer neighborhood services to the local community. Since publication of the NEDTIS, the County has provided municipal grant funding to cities wishing to develop municipal circulators. This included North Miami Beach, Aventura, Sunny Isles Beach, and North Miami.

City Characteristics

The City of North Miami is located in central northeast Miami-Dade County. The 1995 population, according to the South Florida Regional Planning Council, is approximately 51,000, making North Miami the fourth largest City in Miami-Dade County. Current projections suggest that, by the year 2010, over 65,000 people will reside within the City limits. The City has a rich diversity of residents, including Hispanics, Caribbeans, African-Americans, and non-Hispanic whites. Approximately 19% of the residents are 60 or older, and 25% of the population is school-aged. Almost 14% of the households are at or below the poverty level. City data indicates that there is a trend for younger families to move into the City, indicating an increased need for day care, after school activities and summer programs for children. Housing stock includes a mix of single-family homes, apartment buildings and condominiums.

The City offers a mix of office space, manufacturing, and warehousing within its boundaries, and is home to many of Florida’s film and music studios. There are no hospitals or major medical complexes within the City, and commercial shop-

ping is concentrated primarily along Biscayne Boulevard, NW 7th Avenue and NW/NE 123rd Street. The City has been successful in revitalizing depressed areas, as evidenced by the transformation of North Miami Hospital into Johnson Wales University. The City operates eleven parks and community centers, a museum of the arts and a library. There are five elementary, one junior high, and one high school within the City. The north campus of Florida International University is also located within the North Miami municipal boundaries. The North Miami Parks & Recreation Department work closely with the Miami-Dade County Public Schools to provide after school activities for North Miami residents.

Transportation Characteristics

Primary north-south arterials within the City include Biscayne Boulevard, W. Dixie Highway, N.E. 6th Avenue and SR 441 (NW 7th Avenue). The City's only east-west connector between Biscayne Boulevard and the Intracoastal, NW/NE 123rd Street, serves exclusively the medium to high residential uses that abut it. The City is divided by I-95, and the Florida Department of Transportation proposes to extend I-75 east to NW 119th Avenue and NW 27th Avenue. This extension is expected to increase significantly intracity and intercity traffic through the City.

The Miami-Dade Transit Agency provides bus service along major roadways within the City. Generally, regional Metrobus service provided within the City of North Miami is limited, with seven north-south and five east-west regional routes. One premium route, the Biscayne MAX, provides service during peak periods from Aventura, along Biscayne Boulevard through North Miami, to the Miami Central Business District, with stops at NE 151st Street, NE 135th Street and NE 123rd Street. Miami-Dade County has licensed six private jitneys to operate in the Greater North Miami area, five of which provide service along north-south arterials.

Although the City of North Miami has two small buses and a mini-van, the vehicles are used primarily to transport children on field trips and athletic events. The North Miami Foundation, an Alliance for Aging funded organization has two 13-passenger vans used primarily to transport frail homebound elderly residents to grocery stores, doctor's visits and other functions, weekdays from 9 - 4:30 only. The Foundation service area includes North Miami Beach, Aventura, and unincorporated Miami-Dade to the County line.

The limited transportation alternatives contribute to the ownership and use of automobiles within the City; 86% of the workforce drives to work; 73% of the workforce drives alone to work. Only 8% of the workforce use public transportation. The limited Metrobus service also restricts the ability of the City to get children and their parents to and from day care, after school activities and summer programs.

Transit Circulator Recommendations

The Study has recommended that the City implement two publicly available citywide circulator routes, to provide convenient services to three targeted groups:

- 🚶 Senior Citizens
- 🚶 Students
- 🚶 Commuters with long walking distance to bus stops, poor pedestrian and transit amenities, or where low service frequency and duration was identified.

The two circulator routes will be coordinated to combine into a convenient city-wide shuttle that meets the needs of the City's residents, employees, and visitors. One circulator will serve primarily residents to the west of NE 8th Avenue (black and gold line, Figure ES-1), while the other would serve those primarily to the east (black and magenta line, Figure ES-1). The shuttles would connect adjacent to the City's library, availing riders to a safe and comfortable public building in which to wait during transfers. Riders of the North Miami circulators will be able to transfer to and from MDTA regional and premium service at several designated transfer points. The major transfer areas are identified in the figure ES-1 by the bus logos.

The City proposes to operate the vehicles for ten hours each day, Monday through Friday. For the first ninety days, the City will offer the service without charge, after which a fare will be implemented. A summary of the route characteristics is provided in the table on the following page.

For approximately the first year of service, the City intends to contract with a private vendor to provide vehicles and operate the service. Funding for the implementation phase technical assistance has been provided through the FY 2000 MPO Municipal Grant Program. The City will request funds from Miami-Dade County to offset operating costs.

Within the next year, the City plans to explore the purchase or lease of alternative fuel vehicles for the service, and will seek a distinctive vehicle design, such as a trolley. A private vendor will operate the transit service and collect the required Federal, State and County transit information. The City will seek public and private grants to help fund acquisition of the alternative fuel vehicles. It is anticipated that, if funding becomes available in FY 2000, the service could begin as early as Summer 2000.

Preferred Alternative Transit Circulator Characteristics

	West Route	East Route
Destinations:		
School and Community	West Side Community Center Ben Franklin Elementary St. James School First Christian School Gratigny Elementary School North Miami Armory North Miami Library North Miami Junior High School North Miami Elementary School	Natural Bridge Elementary North Miami Junior High North Miami Armory North Miami Library St. Paul Learning Center North Miami City Hall Museum of Contemporary Art WJ Bryan Elementary School Gwen Margolis Community
Ctr		Johnson & Wales University
Parks	Oleander Park Sasso Pool Ben Franklin Pepper Park Griffing Park Gribble Pool Cagni Park	Besade Park Keystone Park Gribble Pool Cagni Park Enchanted Forest
Commercial Locations	Publix at NE 6 th Avenue North Miami Central Business Dist.	Biscayne Boulevard North Miami Central
Business Dist.	Post Office at NW 119 th Street	NE 6 th Av. Shopping
MDTA Bus Transfers	2, 9, 10, 16, 28, 75, 77, E, G	3, 9, 10, 16, 28, 75, 93, G
Total Distance	8.90 miles	9.90 miles
Distance and Time to	from West: 5.30 miles	7.65 miles from South:
Library Transfer:	38 minutes from North: 1.25 miles 6 minutes	27 minutes from North: 4.60 miles 23 minutes
Average Travel Speed (est.)	12 mph	12 mph
Total Travel Time (one way)	45 minutes	50 minutes
Headway (same direction, 1 bus)	1 hour, 30 minutes	1 hour, 40 minutes

Figure ES-1

City of North Miami Transit Circulator Routes - Preferred Alternative
North Miami Transit Circulator Study

